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Eighth Annual Report

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Improved Dwellings Association

January 10, 1894



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OF THE

Improved Dwellings Association

January 10, 1894

BOSTON

PRESS OF GEO. H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET

1894

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OFFICERS FOR 1894.

President.

GEORGE O. SHATTUCK.

Vice-President.

Clerk and Treasurer.

(Elected Jan. 10, 1894.)

ARTHUR B. ELLIS.

Directors.

(Elected Jan. 10, 1894.)

EDITH ANDREW.

GRACE HELEN MEYER.

FREDERIC CUNNINGHAM.

CHARLES S. PENHALLOW.

EDWIN GINN.

GEORGE P. SANGER.

GEORGE S. HALE.

GEORGE O. SHATTUCK.

MARY MORTON KEHEW.

ROBERT S. STURGIS.

IDA M. MASON.

CORNELIA L. WARREN.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CLERK.

JANUARY 10, 1894.

BOTH the gross and net income of the property of the Association are larger this year than last year. Special attention is called to the Second Street estate, known as the Rufus Ellis Memorial, which makes a particularly good showing, considering the hard times which have been felt during a part of the year. As the Rufus Ellis Memorial is the only newly built property belonging to the company, the stockholders may well be gratified with the increased income which has been earned without sacrificing the comfort of the tenants.

31-33 ATHENS STREET.

OLD WOODEN BUILDINGS.—This property, consisting of a double tenement house, is in the rear of the Rufus Ellis Memorial. Although a liberal amount has been paid for repairs, and the rents are no higher than are asked for tenements in wooden buildings in the neighborhood, the net return is very large, about $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Both buildings have been well filled for most of the year.

BROADWAY ESTATE.

OLD WOODEN AND BRICK BUILDINGS.—This property consists of four brick and three wooden tenement houses, and some shops with rooms above fronting on Broadway. The property was bought by the Association with the intention of tearing down buildings and putting up new brick tenements, but the plan was abandoned.

SECOND STREET ESTATE.

(*Rufus Ellis Memorial.*)

Both the gross and net rents of this property exceed those of last year. The net income of this estate for 1893 is a little over $4\frac{3}{8}$ per cent. In 1890 the net income was $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., which is the best yearly return thus far made. At an expense of about \$160 for filling, fencing, etc., the triangular lot of land owned by the Association which adjoins the Ellis Memorial has been turned into a playground. We have now two playgrounds belonging to this estate, one in the rear and one at the side, the triangular one being thrown open for the first time last summer under the management of the Massachusetts Emergency and Hygiene Association. The amount of open space adjoining this estate is very large, and, being used for the most part by the children, affords great relief to the mothers. The cost of water has much increased since meters were placed in the building. The expense of laying out playground, which was paid for partly in 1892 and partly this year, cannot be included in current charges; but, apparently, we must look for a considerable increase in the amount of the water bills in the future.

Taking into account the hard times which have prevailed for some time, the outlook for building some more tenements in South Boston for working people cannot be said to be discouraging, but quite the contrary to people who are willing to be content with a sure 4 per cent. investment.

Respectfully submitted,

ARTHUR B. ELLIS, *Clerk.*

CARE-TAKER AT THE RUFUS ELLIS MEMORIAL.

The employment of a competent care-taker, who shall reside on the premises, is so important in the management of a large tenement property situated as the Ellis Memorial is that the terms of such hiring may be of interest. We have at the Second Street estate an excellent woman care-taker, who, with a husband and one child, is a resident. The following are the terms of employment by the company.

Keep all sidewalks clean, except from heavy snow. (We have a large extent of sidewalk.)

Light and turn off gas in building.

Keep fire in stove for heating water in pipes (necessary to keep water from freezing in cold weather) when ordered, and attend to apparatus when necessary.

Superintend delivery of coal and wood and other property of company.

Keep swill, ash barrels, and sheds clean.

Shut outside doors, and see that latches are sprung at night.

Keep out disorderly people at night.

Keep general oversight of the building.

Clean back yard.

Keep agent's office clean, and attend to fire.

Keep cellars clean outside of coal-bins.

Show rooms in absence of agent, and accept rent for agent when desired.

REMUNERATION.

Three and one-half tons of hard coal, one foot of wood, and kerosene oil. Rent of three rooms in basement* and two rooms upstairs and \$100 a year.

Either party may terminate arrangement at a month's notice.

* None of the basement rooms are used as sleeping-rooms.

REPORT OF MISS BRADSHAW, AGENT.

Rufus Ellis Memorial opened the year 1893 very prosperously, with but one vacancy, the tenants paying very regularly. Removals began in July, and through the rest of the summer there were more or less vacant tenements. The building became well filled in the fall again. But then the hard times began, one business after another was suspended, throwing the men out of work; and they were obliged to give up their homes in some instances, . . . until the sun should come out again. At the close of the year there are more vacancies than at the beginning of the twelve months, and a number of the tenants are stretching every nerve to pay rent and meet expenses. The temptation for an agent to relax strict methods is very great at such times. . . .

During the summer the Hygienic Association opened a children's playground in the vacant triangle beside the building, which was filled with happy children day after day; and much good was done. One incident connected with this enterprise remains vividly in my mind. I met a pathetic, down-trodden-looking little girl in the street in that vicinity one morning, before the playground was opened, and invited her to come to it when it should be ready. On the opening day I looked into the yard, and there, seated on the edge of the sand-pen, was my little waif, with a face of such transcendent happiness that it brought the tears to my eyes. A clean place to play in, picture-books to look at, games for those who wished, and kind matrons to restrain and direct,—not a long array of good things, but they made all the difference between happiness and misery for many children. A beginning was made in manual training by opening a whittling-class one afternoon in the week, which was well attended, and kept some boys from the street. And this brings me to one of the most serious problems that confront us in our work in South Boston, the lawlessness and contempt of property which exist among the boys. Depredations upon the property are constant, and often considerable damage is done. The police are powerless. All remonstrances from them to the parents are useless. They roam throughout the building at will. The janitor cannot be in more than one place at a time. The only solution of this problem lies

in the opening of an industrial school in this vicinity. Sometimes I permit myself to dream a dream of the vacant lot nearly opposite being occupied by an industrial school-building, with pleasant reading-rooms and play-rooms in it, open of an evening from top to bottom, as well as through the day, and all the boys and girls of "Green's Alley," Athens Street, etc., gathered there, busy, interested, learning something, and out of mischief. This dream will be realized when the good people of Boston fully take the lesson to heart that it costs less to educate and amuse children than it does to convict and imprison criminals.

The Home Library continues its beneficent work among the children of Ellis Memorial. May its tribe increase!

MARGARET BRADSHAW.

RUFUS ELLIS MEMORIAL.

Tenements vacant Aug. 1, 1893,	10
Tenements vacant Dec. 19, 1893,	7
New tenants taken since August 1,	19
Removals,	12
Births,	13
Deaths,	3
Loss from vacancies for year,	\$505.00
Loss from unpaid rents,	96.75
Present arrears,	33.70
Average price per room,	74 cents

The Rufus Ellis Memorial, so called, is built in sections, making substantially three separate buildings. It contains fifty-six rentable tenements, divided into suites of one, two, three, and four rooms,—one hundred and thirty rooms in all,—capable of housing about one hundred and eighty people, adults and children,—an average of 1.4 persons to a room. A family stays on the average between seven and eight months, according to a calculation made in 1891. There are two large playgrounds for children connected with the property, one on the side and one in the rear.

OCCUPATION OF TENANTS FOR YEAR 1893.

The classifications of employments of the tenants of the various buildings does not vary materially from former years. See lists in Report No. 7, p. 8.

Special attention is called to the following facts:—

Average price per room in 31-33 Athens Street,	35 cents
Average price per room in Broadway estate houses,	43 cents
Vacancies in Broadway estate houses December 19,	2
Vacancies in 31-33 Athens Street, December 19,	1

The buildings numbered 31 and 33, Athens Street, are old wooden buildings, but kept in good repair. The Broadway estate houses consist of four brick buildings and three old wooden buildings, which are kept in good order.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TREASURER.

(For 1893.)

ASSETS.

Broadway estate (South Boston),	\$55,524.00
Second Street estate (South Boston):—	
Land,	\$10,500.00
Buildings,	<u>50,475.57</u>
	60,975.57
Athens Street estates,	4,187.47
Cash in Boston Safe Deposit & Trust Co.	<u>1,830.94</u>
	\$122,517.98

LIABILITIES.

1,000 shares of capital stock,	\$100,000.00
Mortgage on Broadway estate,	10,000.00
Mortgage on Second Street estate,	7,000.00
Unexpended income invested in Athens Street es- tates,	3,687.04
Balance of income on deposit,	<u>1,830.94</u>
	\$122,517.98

STATEMENT OF INCOME.

Balance from last year's account,	\$1,220.58
Received Rents Broadway estate (con- sisting of shops and tenements) dur- ing the past year (1893),	\$5,091.08
Received Rents Second Street estate (tenement property, no shops) 52*	
weeks, ending Dec. 27, 1893,	4,521.70
Received Rents Athens Street estates (tenement property, no shops) 52	
weeks, ending Dec. 27, 1893,	<u>637.12</u>
	10,249.90
Interest on deposit in Boston Safe Deposit & Trust Co. to December, 1893,	48.35
Money received by agent which cannot be ac- counted for,	2.78
	\$11,521.61

*The Treasurer wishes to correct an error in last year's account. The number of weeks' rent collected for Second Street estate for 1892 was erroneously given as 52. It should have been 53. This alteration makes the showing for this year so much the better by comparison with last year.

PAYMENTS.

Broadway estate (wooden and brick buildings, 15,423 feet of land) :—

Repairs,	\$708.23
Expense,	16.64
Water rates,	137.00
Insurance on plate glass,	40.25
Taxes,	574.72
Paid agents,	<u>254.48</u>
	\$1,731.32

(Net income Broadway estate about 6 per cent.)

Second Street estate (new brick buildings, 10,336 feet of land) :—

Repairs,	\$188.85
Expense,	344.69
Water rates,	316.80
Taxes,	678.40
Paid agent,	<u>300.00</u>
	1,828.74

(Net income Second Street estate, about 4½ per cent.)

Athens Street estates (old wooden buildings, 2,800 feet of land) :—

Repairs,	\$116.89
Expense,	33.09
Water rates,	49.50
Taxes,	48.64
Paid agent,	<u>31.72</u>
	279.84

(Net income Athens Street estates, about 8½ per cent.)

Mortgage interest,	680.00
Paid balance of money loaned by Ida M. Mason for purchase of 31-33 Athens Street and interest,	921.30
Paid A. B. Ellis, services as clerk and treasurer,	200.00
General expense,	49.47
Balance of income on hand,	1,830.94
Paid dividends to stockholders 4 per cent. per an.,	<u>4,000.00</u>
	\$11,521.61

ARTHUR B. ELLIS, *Treasurer.*

BOSTON, Jan. 1, 1894.

BOSTON, March 28, 1894.

TO THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTORS OF THE IMPROVED DWELLINGS ASSOCIATION:

Gentlemen,—I have carefully examined the books and accounts of your corporation for the year 1893, as kept by your Treasurer, Arthur B. Ellis, Esq.

The entries were in order, the cash was correctly cast and satisfactorily vouched. The balance, \$1,830.94, was in the Boston Safe Deposit & Trust Company.

The postings from cash and journal were correctly made to proper accounts; and the details of the annual statement submitted by your Treasurer, with a surplus of \$1,830.94, were correct in every particular.

Faithfully,

GEORGE T. STODDARD, *Auditor.*

BOSTON, March 31, 1894.

We have employed Mr. George T. Stoddard to examine the Treasurer's books and accounts for the year ending Jan. 1, 1894, under the authority given your committee; and we approve his report, and adopt it as our own.

E. PIERSON BEEBE,
MARTIN L. BRADFORD,
ROBT. S. STURGIS, } *Auditing Committee.*

ACT OF INCORPORATION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

SECT. 1. Nathaniel J. Bradlee, Richard H. Dana, Charles W. Dexter, Arthur B. Ellis, George S. Hale, Alice N. Lincoln, Ida M. Mason, George O. Shattuck, their associates and successors, are hereby made a corporation for the term of thirty years, by the name of the "Improved Dwellings Association," in the city of Boston, to hold and improve real estate in said city, for the purpose of erecting, maintaining, leasing, and improving homes for working people and others of moderate means, and to promote the adoption of modes of building and enforcement of sanitary regulations calculated to secure the comfortable and healthful condition of structures so occupied; subject to the provisions of chapters one hundred and five and one hundred and six of the Public Statutes, and to all general laws which now are or may hereafter be in force relating to such corporations.

SECT. 2. Said corporation shall have power to buy, sell, and hold real estate for the purposes aforesaid, not exceeding two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in value.

SECT. 3. The capital stock of said corporation shall not exceed two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, to be divided into shares each of the par value of one hundred dollars, and the dividends on said shares shall not exceed six per cent. per annum on the par value thereof.

SECT. 4. Any surplus accumulated by said corporation shall be used as a sinking or reserve fund or in improving the condition or increasing the number or the extent and capacity of the buildings occupied for such homes: *provided, however,* that the rentals from all the property owned by said corporation shall be limited to such rates as will, after paying six per cent. for every year, maintain said sinking or reserve fund at a sum not exceeding fifty thousand dollars.

SECT. 5. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

Approved April 3, 1885.

